ITMC 2015 Project Excellence Awards

Project Title: Mutual Aid Frequencies Permit Request

Agency: Department of Administration (DOA), Public Safety Communications Bureau (PSCB)

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Summary Paragraph:
The State of Montana holds statewide licenses for over 20 mutual aid frequencies. Licenses are held to allow eligible public safety users access to these shared frequencies. Users must secure a valid permit providing permission to use specific frequencies. The Mutual Aid Frequencies Permit Request service automates this permitting process.

Project Description:
The State of Montana, Department of Administration through Public Safety Communication Bureau (PSCB) holds statewide licenses for over 20 general user and common radio frequencies in accordance with the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). The licenses are held to allow eligible users access to the frequencies through a mutual aid frequencies permit.

Permission to use Montana Mutual Aid and Common Frequencies requires each user to go through an approval process. Users are all subject to FCC regulations and standard operation procedure and are bound by all restrictions of the FCC License. With DOA's legislated responsibility to manage the mutual aid frequencies the Mutual Aid Frequencies Permit Request service was implemented to automate the permitting and approval process.

To apply for a permit, requestors are required to submit an application online. The mutual aid frequency users can request a new permit or find a past permits to view, print or change through the online service.

For new permit requests, users simply complete the required information including the base demographic information such as name, address, county/tribe and the type of organization as

well as a description explaining the reason for the request. Once the user completes the base permit information they are asked to choose the frequencies they are requesting permission to use. This includes information on the General Use Frequencies such as Common Mutual Aid to more specific frequencies not available state wide such as Tactical General User Interoperability for law enforcement, fire, EMS and medical agencies including local, state, tribal and federal as well. Each frequency displays a link to a Restrictions Map for the user to review based on their selection criteria.

Once all selections are made the user is allowed to review their application prior to submitting their request. Once submitted, the PSCB reviews the requests through an internal administrative service that contains all of the information submitted by the end-users.

Through the administrative service the PSCB team reviews, approves or denies frequency permit requests all through the online service. PSCB is presented a dashboard of all active, pending, rejected, canceled and expired permits which provides the team a quick snapshot of work required and the current status of all permits. Additional features of the administrative service are very much like a content management tool that allows the PSCB team to Manage and Update Frequencies, Manage Agency Types, Manage Signatures (for approval letters) as well as Manage Counties. This is a great tool for the PSCB team to do real time updates if needed.

In addition to the base dashboards and systems/content management tools the PSCB team can view permits and emails that were sent to users.   PSCB can find permits and emails searching on an organization, permit number, county/tribe or by frequency.   Once the permit in question is found the permit can be canceled or edited, a preview of the actual permit is available as well, along with a copy of the email.   While editing the permits the PSCB users can add public comments to the permits, add a reason for the change to the permit and update the permit which can then be seen by the permit requestor once the email is sent out.

The Mutual Aid Frequencies Permit Request service was re-written and launched in October 2014, in .net language. The re-write included many of the new administrative features in addition to responsive design to allow all users to access the service through any mobile device.